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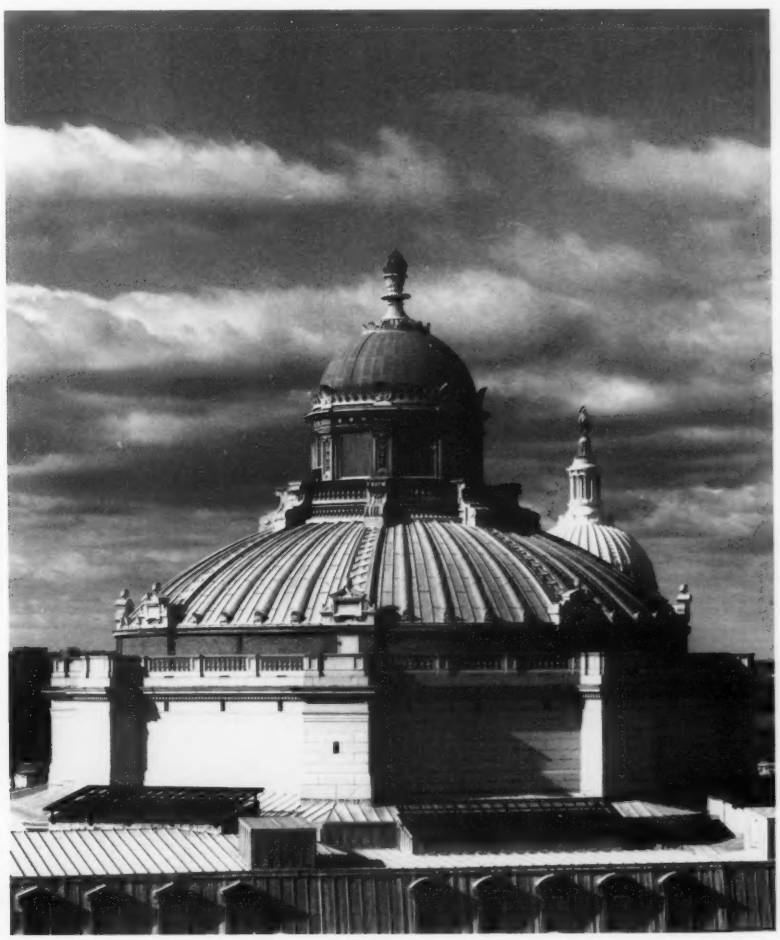

The Library's Fiscal 1998 Budget

Library of Congress
INFORMATION BULLETIN
Vol. 56, No. 5
March 10, 1997

JAMES H. BILLINGTON
Librarian of Congress

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On the Cover: Dome of the 1897 Thomas Jefferson Building; the Library will mark the building's centennial and completion of a 10-year renovation this year with a celebration honoring its neighbor, Congress, which has overseen the Library's growth into the largest research institution in the world.

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The *Library of Congress Information Bulletin* is issued biweekly except in August (no issues published) and in December (one issue published) by the Public Affairs Office of the Library of Congress and distributed free of charge to publicly supported libraries and research institutions, academic libraries, learned societies, and allied organizations in the United States. It is also available over the Internet. On World Wide Web, use the following address: gopher://marvel.loc.gov/11/loc/pubs/lcib. On Gopher, connect to marvel.loc.gov and look under "Events, Facilities, Publications, and Services."

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GUY LAMOLINARA, Editor
JOHN H. SAYERS, Production

Yusef El-Amin

Assembled in the Members' Room were (from left): Winston Tabb, associate librarian for Library Services; James Neal, director of libraries, Johns Hopkins University; Dr. Billington; Martín Gomez, director, Brooklyn Public Library; Charles Johnson, director, Hennepin County (Minn.) Public Library System; John Cole, director, Center for the Book; Betty Turock, ALA past president; Barbara Ford, ALA president-elect; Bruce Daniels, ALA treasurer; Mary Somerville, ALA president; Evie Wilson-Lingbloom, manager of Edmonds Branch of Sno-Isle (Wash.) Regional Library; Nancy Kranich, associate university librarian, New York University; Donald Scott, Deputy Librarian of Congress; Geraldine Otremba, director, Congressional Relations Office; Charles Beard, director of libraries, Georgia College; Jo An Jenkins, LC chief of staff; Robert Newlen, Congressional Research Service and member of ALA Executive Board; Pat Smith, executive director, Texas Library Association; and Judith Farley, Office of the Librarian and member of ALA Council.

ALA Comes to the Library

LC Receptions, Programs Highlight Midwinter Meeting

A reception the night of Feb. 15 in the splendor of the newly renovated Jefferson Building was the high point in a series of programs offered by the Library in association with the Midwinter Meeting of the American Library Association.

The Feb. 15-17 programs and presentations gave LC staff the opportunity to shine before their fellow professionals from around the country. Visitors were treated to architectural tours of the Jefferson Building and other places in the Library, as well as to tours of many of the institution's unique collections.

On Saturday evening, in the Great Hall, Main Reading Room and Northwest Curtain and Pavilion, the visitors were "enchanted by the building as well as by the warm reception they received from the staff," said Roberta Stevens, who coordinated the Library's ALA activities, both on Capitol Hill and at the Washington Convention Center.

According to Ms. Stevens, what made the three days such a success was "the degree of cooperation and the degree of pride that staff showed in their work and the institution were evident to all."

Yusef El-Amin

Dr. Billington and Fred Jenkins, a reception attendee.

The nearly 3,000 visitors were obviously delighted by the beauty of the restored Jefferson spaces and for the chance to enter the Main Reading Room directly from the Great Hall. "This is like coming to Mecca," said one librarian from California as she entered the reading room after waiting in a line that stretched almost to the center of the Great Hall. Another visitor told an LC staffer how lucky he was to be able to work in such a beautiful place. That staffer replied that even he had never before had the chance to pass from the Great Hall directly to the Main Reading Room – an entrance that has been barricaded during renovations since 1987.

Winston Tabb, associate librarian for Library Services, called the staff's performance "a big accomplishment for the Library."

Planning took several months, beginning in fall 1996, when a series of programs was established to provide an overview of some of the Library's major endeavors. A Web site was set up to publicize the events, and the *Information Bulletin* repeatedly published a list of the offerings. "Even the early Sunday morning sessions were well attended," said Ms. Stevens.

Among the presentations, staff provided demonstrations of THOMAS, LOCIS and GLIN (Global Legal Information Network). Visitors could also view the digitization of historical materials for the National Digital Library Program, get an in-depth look at the NDL Program, and learn how the Library has developed its growing electronic exhibitions. The Learning Page, targeted at K-12 students and teachers who use the Library's digital collections, was also the subject of a session.

Area studies specialists told of their plans for the remarkable collections they oversee and the new quarters for their divisions. Representatives from the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) gave a virtual tour of their Taylor Street facility and showed how adaptive technology can be used by persons with disabilities to access the Internet.

Several sessions were devoted to aspects of cataloging: the Cataloging in Publication Division presented its pilot electronic program, and catalogers told how they used technology to improve productivity.

The Copyright Office showed off its electronic pilot, called CORDS (Copyright Electronic Registration, Recordation and Deposit System), and the Cataloging Distribution Service gave an overview of its newest products.

Yusef El-Amin

ALA Midwinter attendees crowded into the Main Reading Room.

Yusef El-Amin

Deputy Librarian Donald Scott and ALA President Mary Somerville attended the Feb. 15 Great Hall reception.

Staff of the special collections divisions also had their turn. The Geography and Map Division brought out a selection of cartographic treasures and demonstrated the latest technology from the Center for Geographic Information. The Music Division discussed some of its most important collections, as did the Manuscript Division. The Prints and Photographs Division focused on its technical services and its digital image base, containing more than 100,000 images.

The Rare Book and Special Collections Division held an open house that included a look at Thomas Jefferson's library, the seed from which the present collections of the Library grew; rare artists' books; and illustrated volumes from the Rosenwald Room.

The Preservation Directorate highlighted several aspects of its work, such as research and testing, conserving library materials and caring for collections.

Meanwhile, at the Washington Convention Center, LC staff worked the Library's three exhibition booths – a large space that featured the NDL Program (including the Learning Page), THOMAS, the Cataloging Distribution Service, the Center for the Book, LOCIS, the Copyright Office, and the LC/Ameritech National Digital Library Competition, as well as the FLICC/Fedlink and NLS booths.

The free American Memory posters featuring a composite portrait of Abraham Lincoln made from 1,100 Mathew Brady photographs were a big draw. And the chance to shop was also an irresistible lure. The Sales Shop took in more than $28,000 during the weekend – at the convention center, the Madison Building and a shop set up in the Great Hall for the reception.

Despite the success of the three days of events, the Library will not have long to savor its success. As Mr. Tabb said, this was merely a "dress rehearsal" for 1998. That year, in late June, the ALA will hold its Annual Conference in Washington and the number of attendees will likely be about twice as many.

Employing the theme "Kids Can't Wait ... Library Advocacy Now!" Mary Somerville, ALA president, opened the Feb. 15 President's Program, held across the street from the Washington Convention Center, at the Grand Hyatt Hotel.

An example of what children can accomplish when using the Information Superhighway was conveyed in the person of Vincent Dawkins, a fifth-grader from Baltimore. He is a participant in the Enoch Pratt Free Library's Whole New World Program. "I have a license to drive the Information Superhighway," he told the audience. "On the Internet, I can go anywhere. The Whole New World Program gave me something to do on Saturday other than watching TV and playing video games."

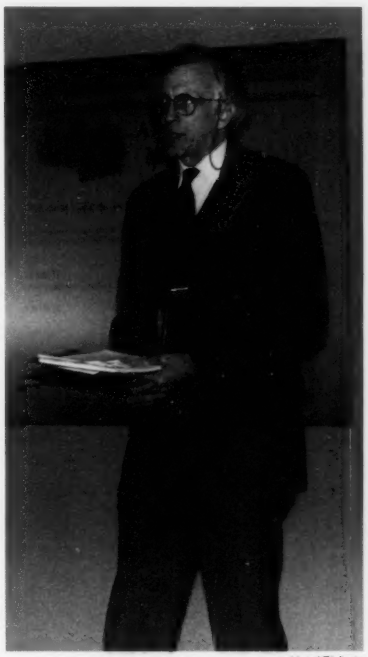
Vincent was followed by Susan Ness, a member of the Federal Communications Commission. Ms. Ness worked on the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which requires Internet providers to offer discounted access to libraries and schools. Using the Internet, she said, "students can flip through the electronic card catalog even when the library is closed. But I need not tell you that library resources are woefully limited.

"Just a year ago, President Clinton signed the Telecommunications Act [in the Library of Congress's Main Reading Room]." But the bill does not require the provision of computers and software.

Richard R. Riley, secretary of education, followed Ms. Ness and stressed the need for parents' commitment to their children's education. "Schools can't do it alone. There needs to be strong parental involvement," he said.

While emphasizing the major role parents have to play, Mr. Riley also noted the importance of libraries in the educational framework. "Libraries offer boundless opportunities for knowledge," he said. "Librarians are educators in the very best sense of the word. Libraries provide a place where parents and children can learn together."

– *Guy Lamolinara*



Yusef El-Amin

Carl Fleischhauer, National Digital Library Program coordinator, gave an overview of the American Memory on-line collections in the Digital Library Visitors' Center.

Looking Toward 1998

Dr. Billington Requests 7.1 Percent Increase

by Edward Ohnemus

Dr. Billington asked Congress last month for a budget of $387.6 million, including $30.4 million in authority to use receipts, for fiscal year 1998 *(see LC Information Bulletin, Feb. 24)*.

"Today the Library faces the challenge of carrying out a full transition to new electronic services for Congress and the public, as well as to the more efficient operations made possible by new technology," he said.

"This requires a modest capital investment in technology now. It also requires basic continuing support from Congress, including paying for mandatory pay increases and price-level increases — to sustain our traditional work of cataloging, collections security and access to the collections."

"Today the Library faces the challenge of carrying out a full transition to new electronic services for Congress and the public, as well as to the more efficient operations made possible by new technology."

– James H. Billington
Librarian of Congress

The budget proposed by Dr. Billington represents a $25.7 million (7.1 percent) net increase over the current budget of $361,896,000, which includes the authority to spend $30,138,000 in receipts. LC's authorized receipts come from the Copyright Office and the Cataloging Distribution Service.

Dr. Billington, Deputy Librarian Donald Scott and other senior Library officials appeared for two hours on Feb. 12 before the House Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee, led by Rep. James T. Walsh (R-N.Y.).

"Since last September, when Dr. Billington appointed me," Mr. Scott told the panel, "I have found that the staff at all levels have a strong will to succeed and are receptive to new ideas."

Subcommittee members on hand in addition to Rep. Walsh were Ranking Member José E. Serrano (D-N.Y.) and Reps. Randy "Duke" Cunningham (R-Calif.), Zach Wamp (R-Tenn.), Tom Latham (R-Iowa) and Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio).

"The Library's services," Dr. Billington said, "are extremely labor-intensive. Some 70 percent of our budget is for payroll costs. Future economies must come primarily from reengineering our major operations and from investing further in automation. Both will improve the productivity of our staff."

The Library has requested a total increase of $27 million in funding, Dr. Billington told the panel, which when coupled with $1.3 million in program reductions ($1 million from a one-time fee associated with the FY 1997 General Accounting Office review and $320,127 from a decrease in nonpersonal expenses at the Cataloging Distribution Service), results in a requested $25.7 million *net* increase in funding.

More than half of the requested increase, or $14.7 million, is for mandatory increases: $10.7 million to fund mandatory pay and $4 million to fund unavoidable price-level increases in goods and services.

Of the remaining $12.3 million in the requested increase, Dr. Billington said:

- $5.6 million would go to start an Integrated Library System (ILS) at the Library;
- $500,000 would go to support the development of the Global Legal Information System (GLIN) and the Copyright Office Electronic Registration, Recordation and Deposit System (CORDS);
- $2.5 million would go to buy 10,000 talking book machines for LC's National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped;
- $1.9 million would go to initiate a "staff succession program." The money would fund 37 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions in FY 1998.
- $1.3 million would go for improved security and 18 FTEs for additional police officers; and
- $500,000 would go for a temporary personnel increase in the Copyright Office to maintain registration processing on an acceptable schedule.

Regarding the $14.7 million requested for mandatories, Mr. Scott said, "We are keenly aware that Congress has given the Library very considerate treatment. Despite the committee's best efforts, however, we now have little flexibility left to absorb such costs. During the last five years, we have had a net reduction in our work force of 435 FTEs, many of them highly skilled professionals.

"Without congressional funding for these mandatories in 1998, we would be forced to cut another 178 positions."

Chairman Walsh said, "We all have a deep abiding interest in the Library of Congress. It's a part of this body; it's the most inclusive repository of human knowledge ever assembled. ... We will do what we can in light of the downward pressure on the federal budget. We do not want to be penny-wise and pound-foolish with the Library of Congress."

Following the chairman's remarks, Rep. Serrano said: "I hope we can be helpful in a difficult time and that the actions we take will in no way hurt the operations of the Library."

Responding to a question from Rep. Kaptur about the Library's progress in reducing its unprocessed arrearages by 48 percent, Dr. Billington said: "I want to pay tribute to our catalogers — there are nearly 1,000 of them. They are providing an annual benefit to the nation's libraries conservatively estimated now at $268 million per year. ... Our catalogers have done an outstanding job in tackling this project."

Some of the members of the panel, including Reps. Cunningham and Latham, asked questions on the proposed "succession planning" program, which would begin in FY 1998 and continue for three years. The Library requested $1.9 million in FY 1998 to begin the program and fund 37 additional positions in two service units of the Library: 25 in the Congressional Research Service and 12 in Library Services. CRS and Library Services have both been hit hard by retirements of key employees, who do research or work with the collections in highly specialized areas, such as law, economics and foreign languages, Dr. Billington explained in his testimony.

Rep. Latham asked: "Is there a historic reason why you will have so many retirements in the next few years?"

Dr. Billington responded: "The Library built up rapidly in the postwar period of the 1950s and 1960s. We have a very low turnover rate — 3.7 percent. In the last five years, we have had level budgets and staff reductions [as] we experienced 'age creep' in our work force. Twenty-five of the 37 billets are in CRS, where, for example, by 2006, nearly 52 percent of CRS's staff will be eligible to retire. This poses a significant threat to CRS's ability to maintain its current analytic and information services unless training of replacement staff can begin soon, under the tutelage of the senior staff who are eligible for retirement."

"The succession plan in CRS," CRS Director Daniel P. Mulhollan said, "calls for hiring 60 additional FTEs over the next three years: 25 in FY 1998, 25 in FY 1999 and 10 in FY 2000. During the subsequent six years, we would reduce the FTEs by 10 each year, so that by the year 2006 we will return to our current service level of 747 FTEs. ... The average tenure of a legislative assistant in the House today is 1.9 years; the average legislative director has been on the job 2.6 years. By contrast, the average CRS analyst and information specialist has been building expertise on issues and how they are addressed within the legislative framework for 18.5 years."

"We do not want to be penny-wise and pound-foolish with the Library of Congress."

– Rep. James T. Walsh (R-N.Y.)
Chairman, House Legislative Branch
Appropriations Subcommittee

Public Witnesses

During the afternoon session, the panel heard from Robert L. Oakley of Georgetown University Law Library, who spoke on behalf of the American Library Association, the American Association of Law Libraries, the Association of Research Libraries, and the Special Libraries Association.

Mr. Oakley asked the panel to support key Library activities and the proposed integrated library system (ILS). "An ILS can integrate key library functions, including acquisitions, cataloging, inventory control, serials management, circulation, binding, preservation, sear-ching of the library's holdings, management statistics and more. ... [With an ILS] the Yale University Library realized a 70 percent increase in cataloging throughput per FTE over the past 10 years, from 762 to 1,325 titles per FTE per year."

The panel next heard from the Library's three employee union leaders, who supported LC's budget proposal.

Christine Shollenberger, president, AFSCME Local 2910, said, "Our bargaining unit members possess special skills not easily obtained outside the Library, and in order to replenish our ranks with qualified staff, we need your support."

Joel Stern, president of AFSCME Local 2477, said: "There is a tremendous opportunity for career programs at the Library."

Dennis M. Roth, president, Congressional Research Employees Association, favored the proposed CRS succession planning program. "The cushion that we might have had in hiring new people evaporated with the tight budgets of the 1980s and early 1990s."

– Edward Ohnemus is assistant editor of The Gazette, *the Library's staff newspaper.*

This sketch of Custer's division retiring from Mount Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley on Oct. 7, 1864, is by Alfred Waud. Recognized as the best of the Civil War sketch artists who drew the war for the nation's pictorial press, Waud could render a scene quickly and accurately, with an artist's eye for composition and a reporter's instinct for human interest. At a time when the shutter speed of cameras was not fast enough to capture action, the public's only glimpse of battle came from sketch artists. Waud's apparent courage under fire and passion for the men he depicted drew him dangerously close to the fighting, and his drawings portray more intimately that those by any other artist the drama and the horror of this country's most devastating conflict.

George Custer's Civil War Command

Preview of a Major Exhibition to Go On-Line in Mid-March

A preview of an unprecedented exhibition at the Library, "American Treasures of the Library of Congress," will be available on the Library's World Wide Web site at http://www.loc.gov in mid-March.

This permanent, rotating exhibition will open to the public in the Library's Jefferson Building on May 1. Because of preservation considerations, some of the items will be on view only briefly.

George Armstrong Custer (1839-1876), who lost his life at the Battle of Little Bighorn in June 1876, first became known for his military exploits during the Civil War. He began the war as a second lieutenant assigned to the Second U.S. Cavalry and served at the Battle of Bull Run. His efforts during the Peninsular campaign in the spring of 1862 convinced Gen. George McClellan, commanding Union forces in Virginia, to add him to his staff.

In the fall of 1864, by now a major general, Custer took over the Third Cavalry Division during the Shenandoah Valley Campaign in Virginia led by Gen. Philip Sheridan. Sheridan's men forced Confederate troops from the valley, which served the South as a major source of provisions, and proceeded to burn and destroy homes, farms and standing crops as they returned North. Custer so distinguished himself that his cavalrymen were given a prominent role in pursuing Gen. Robert E. Lee's decimated Confederate army as it retreated from Richmond in April 1865. It was Custer who received the Confederate flag of truce, which preceded Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House on the morning of April 9.

– *based on text in* American Treasures of the Library of Congress, *a catalog published by Harry N. Abrams Inc. in association with the Library of Congress.*

Polish Journalist Visits Library

Michnik Reports on End of Communism in His Country

Adam Michnik, editor in chief of Poland's best-selling daily newspaper, the *Gazeta Wyborcza*, recently offered an explanation of Solidarity's successful talks with government officials in 1989 that led to the end of Communist rule in Poland.

He quoted Aleksander Kwasniewski, the Polish president and member of the post-Communist Democratic Left Alliance party. "The president told me that the roundtable discussions were successful because 'we didn't have enough imagination,'" Mr. Michnik recalled, adding, "If we'd had enough imagination to realize that these negotiations would lead to the end of their political power, the Communists would probably have broken them off. No one could foresee that these events would ultimately lead all the way to the unification of Germany."

The former Solidarity leader, who endured six years in prison for his opposition to the Communists, spoke through an interpreter to a full house in the Mumford Room on February 18. His talk on "Europe: Eight Years After Communism" was sponsored by the Library's European Division.

Although some of those present may have expected to hear Mr. Michnik decry his country's election of a former Communist as president, he was optimistic about his country's current and future political conditions. He pointed out that the overwhelming changes brought by a newly democratic form of government could have unpredictable and paradoxical consequences. "We can look back to an economy full of absurdities and shortages to one that has become robust and well-grounded," he said. "But, for the shock therapy involved, a price must be paid. In this case, by the first generation of people who won the battle against the Communist regime then lost the [1995 presidential] elections."

Mr. Michnik has explored the reasons for this outcome in several articles published in the United States. In a March 1996 article on "Post-Communism: A Search for Meaning," published in *Transition*, he reminded readers that the leaders of Solidarity were heroes but not gods; that the people who "carried out the historic task of the anti-Communist revolution in Poland" did so "amidst errors, inconsistencies, ill-considered decisions, and demoralizing arguments.

"With that revolution, the time of Solidarity and [former President Lech] Walesa had passed," he wrote. "The great myth turned into a caricature. The movement toward freedom degenerated into noisy arrogance and greed. ... It is not so much that the post-Communist parties won as that the post-Solidarity parties lost. They were unable to build an elementary pre-electoral coalition ... because they were mired in pettiness and lack of imagination.

Continued on page 107

Dorfman, Skármeta Offer Chilean Outlook

Authors Hold Roundtable Discussion at Library

Two of Latin America's most prominent authors said that Chile should not forget its troubled past as it plunges headlong into the global economy.

Ariel Dorfman and Antonio Skármeta spoke to a jam-packed Pickford Theater audience Thursday morning, Feb. 27.

Mr. Dorfman is perhaps best known for his play *Death and the Maiden* — in which a woman unexpectedly meets a man she believes tortured her in prison years before — a drama that played on Broadway, won many awards and was made into a film.

Mr. Skármeta is the author of *The Postman*, which tells a fictional story of how fellow Chilean Pablo Neruda, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1971, became friends with his postman while living in exile. This story was made into the award-winning movie *Il Postino*.

The Library's Director for Scholarly Programs Prosser Gifford and Hispanic Division Chief Georgette Dorn moderated the panel.

Both Mr. Dorfman and Mr. Skármeta are from Chile but left in 1973, when President Salvador Allende was assassinated and Gen. Augusto Pinochet seized power and became the country's military dictator. Mr. Dorfman now lives in the United States and teaches at Duke University. Mr. Skármeta, who lived in exile first in Argentina and later in Berlin, returned to Chile in 1989. The country returned to democratic rule in 1990.

These writers and others were in Washington as part of a group accompanying Chilean President Eduardo Frei, who spoke to a joint session of Congress, also on Feb. 27, and for whom President Clinton gave a White House state dinner on Feb. 25.

Mr. Dorfman talked about some of the unexpected problems that Chile's economic success has brought. "As you know, Chile is vaunted to be one of the great economic miracles. It's supposed to be one of the places in the world that show why globalization is good and why it's good to have supposedly underdeveloped nations integrate into the market. And this is, in fact, related to culture in rather strange ways," he said.

Jim Higgins

Ariel Dorfman (left) and Antonio Skármeta signed copies of their books in the Pickford Theater lobby following the program.

"[Chile] is a country, which, with all its extraordinary economic success, has had a certain mad rush toward consumerism, toward profit-making and toward a lack of solidarity and understanding that there is a need in any country for a community to be taken care of. I think that culture is one of the forms that fall by the wayside in the midst of all this. There is a cultural crisis of identity, not only in Chile, but I would say in any nation that this moment is facing the problems of globalization. ... And I think this is particularly so in Chile because it is a country that has a very troubled past. So I find in Chile people constantly who are haunted by the past and who do not want to acknowledge that haunting. And you know very well that when a ghost is haunting you, if you want to make believe that the ghost is not there, the ghost will come back with all its relatives."

Responding to Mr. Dorfman, Mr. Skármeta said writers measure success differently than politicians. "When you live in Chile, the fact that Chile is building this image of a successful country is a very dramatic thing because you realize that in everyday life this situation doesn't necessarily bring happiness to the people. There are many things that are left behind, and people don't come back to them. Among the things are, of course, all the things that are interesting to writers. When Ariel writes *Death and the Maiden*, he is bringing ... forward the hidden history of Chile, and he's telling us: 'OK, it's our ghost and we are not talking about our ghosts and here I will show some of them.'"

Both men talked about how Chileans are still struggling to come to grips with the violence and repression that occurred during the 17-year dictatorship of Gen. Pinochet.

"Now, my impression is that this consensus [government] is very good, but it's been arrived at by pretending there is no conflict," Mr. Dorfman said. "Chile is also a country of appearances, but there is a dissociation. It's as if we had gone through such trauma in the past, that we have this fear of conflict. And I would like to suggest that the *duende* [ghost or elf] of literature and art is one of the ways — the extraordinary ways — in which a society can indirectly, obliquely know itself, contain its pain, have some sort of a dialogue. When one reader reads, let's say *The Postman* of Antonio, and then another reader reads that same book, it's not just that they may talk about it at a party — it's that somehow they're sharing that vision together."

Mr. Skármeta said, "The feeling you have in Chile is that because of all the political tragedy and because there was a very clever political solution to our problems everybody is trying to do [things] well, and this is why conflict was suppressed. If you go to a TV show and you are critical about this or that, immediately, they will tell a joke or they will go to do something else. It's not censorship, it's just that the important subjects are not put on the table at this point.

"This is a very interesting situation for a writer because there is the hidden country full of emotions and feelings and there is the productive country that goes ahead and says, 'Okay, we made mistakes. That is the past. We don't talk about it — just go ahead.'

"I think those of us — so to say — the politicians, the men who are doing business are doing their work and we, writers, filmmakers, the people who are working in the media are doing our work also, but these two countries, they don't come together."

Mr. Dorfman then told a story. "When I was there last — I was there around a month and a half ago — I noticed one day that my mother-in-law, Elva, who is the mother of my wife, Angelica, and who was staying with us in our little bungalow there that we have in Santiago, was desperately looking for her glasses. She couldn't find her reading glasses. She was trying to read something. She was looking and looking and the whole family started looking and couldn't find them. And she said, 'Well I know why this is happening. *Son los duendes.* The little elves. I did not give them milk last night. I didn't put milk out for them so they could have their milk and help me find these things.'

"And I said, 'Well you know, I think we should put some milk out, by all means. We have to find your glasses.' So we did and the next day we found them very easily in places where we had looked arduously, covetously. And they were there. 'I think the elves have brought them back,' she said.

"And I began thinking and thinking about this. ... This seems to be the problem of the country. I think that we've forgotten that the *duendes* are there, that the elves are there. We've forgotten that there are invisible spirits. That there is a need to feed what is invisible — that is not itemized in any budget whatsoever. ... And I would suggest that the way to do it was to put a bit more money into culture, into literature, into books, into libraries," Mr. Dorfman said.

During the question-and-answer session, Mr. Skármeta, who currently hosts an award-winning TV show that he created in Chile called "Books and Writers," was asked how he came to write *The Postman.*

"In 1983, I was living in exile in Berlin, and I was living quite a poor life. I didn't speak especially well the language. I was trying to make a living as a freelance writer, and I had had some small successes writing scripts for films, among them, a couple related to the political situation in Latin America. At that time, for the first time in my life in exile, I had gathered enough money to give myself a grant, a six-month grant to write a novel I wanted with all my heart and soul to write. A novel that would be called *Burning Patience* because Pablo Neruda once ... said those words. And I concentrated on my work and didn't take any other jobs and was working quite a lot with energy on that project. I had written around 500 pages for a big novel. This big novel would be a novel in the novels of the boom style, a very large novel ... that would embrace all the history of the world from Adam and Eve to the coup in 1973.

"I was in the middle of this project [when] the producer for whom I had written these successful scripts recently [and] I had dinner and we talked quite a lot. After dinner he asked me what I was doing. I told him I was writing a story about this and that and I don't know why — because of the wine maybe — I put the accent on, as I was telling the story, on two characters who were only part of this big mural painting: the poet and the postman. The producer listened to that and he said to me immediately: 'This is a script for a film. Please write it for me.' I said to him: 'No. No way. I'm not going to do it. I just want to write the novel. I have enough money now. I don't need to sell anything to make a living.'

"He said: 'No, no, no. It's a good idea. It's a good idea. We can make a film out of it. A little film with a low budget. I have the money.'

"I said: 'No. I won't do that.'

"And then he did something irresistible for a writer living in exile. He wrote a check.

"Well, the next morning I forgot the novel and began to write the script."

–Edward Ohnemus

Mr. Ohnemus is assistant editor of The Gazette, *the Library's staff newspaper.*

Authors at a Glance

Ariel Dorfman – Books in English: *Death and the Maiden, Some Write to the Future, Hard Rain, Windows, My House Is on Fire, Chile from Within 1973-1988, Mascara, The Unborn Make History, Last Waltz in Santiago and Other Poems of Exile and Disappearance, The Last Song of Manuel Sendero, The Empire's Old Clothes, Missing, Konfidenz* and *How to Read Donald Duck.*

Antonio Skármeta – Books in English: *The Postman, Burning Patience, Stories, Watch Where the Wolf Is Going, The Insurrection, I Dreamt the Snow Was Burning, Chileno!* and *Love-Fifteen.*

News from the Center for the Book

Young Poets from D.C. Schools Read at Library Ceremony

"Secret Place"
by Tykisha Bell
Coolidge High School

In my secret place
where flowers blossom
in beauty and birds
whisper, I forgive
myself for making others
angry.

On Jan. 27, an overflow crowd of fellow students, family, teachers and writers enjoyed a lively celebration and poetry reading by more than a dozen students, grades one through 11, from Washington public schools.

The students, whose poems are currently displayed on "Metro Muse" posters in 10 Metrorail stations throughout the city, were honored for their achievement. The students entertained and impressed the audience with their poise and poetry. Tonya Vidal Kinlow, at-large-representative on the D.C. Board of Education, spoke briefly about the importance of the program. The event, which also honored project founder and director Laurie Stroblas, was hosted by the Center for the Book, one of the project sponsors.

"New Year"
(based on a line by Lucille Clifton)
by Natasha Simmons
Hart Junior High School and
D.C. WritersCorps

I am running into a new year

I let the old years twirl back
Like a whirlpool.
I let it make me dizzy,
Like strong hands, like
All my old secrets and
It will be hard to let go
Of what I wrote to myself
About my friends
Seven, eleven, ten years past,
But I'm running into a new year
And the old years have passed
But finally I'm twelve
At last.

"Snowfall"
by Josh Saltzman
Ellington School of the Arts

When I stand outside in a silent snowfall
and gaze straight up,
the snow is not floating down towards earth.
I am floating up towards heaven.

The student poets received widespread media coverage. Excerpts from the readings were shown on Washington television news on Jan. 27 and subsequently on NBC-TV's "The Today Show," and on the cable news channel MSNBC. The *Washington Post* and *Washington Times* carried articles, as did the Associated Press and *Time Magazine for Kids*. On radio, four of the young Metro Muse authors read from their poster poems on Washington's WAMU-FM, with commentary by project adviser and poet E. Ethelbert Miller; other students were featured on a segment of National Public Radio's "All Things Considered."

"I'm thrilled by the response," said Ms. Stroblas, who founded the District Lines Poetry Project in 1994. "We hope it helps ensure the project's future and its continued appearance in our subway cars. Our goal is to encourage the creative efforts of young people here in Washington and simultaneously help introduce the general public to poetry. This is the first time poetry has been showcased in the Metrorail system: our posters give a whole new meaning to the term 'underground poetry!'"

The District Lines Poetry project operates under the auspices of the Federation of Friends of the DC Public Library. In addition to the Center for the Book, project sponsors are the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the District of Columbia Commission on the Arts/National Endowment for the Arts, the Humanities Council of Washington,

Continued on page 107

Natasha Simmons, grade 7, of Hart Junior High School, reads her poem as Laurie Stroblas listens.

"Fear"
by Malik Waleed
Bancroft Elementary School

Fear is like underpants
that are too tight.
You can't get in them.
Green underpants outside
in the grass. Underpants
you don't like to wear.

Fear looked great at first
and then it got tight
around my stomach.
Make fear go away. Loosen up.

Jon Newsom Named Chief of Music Division

Jon W. Newsom, a 30-year Library of Congress veteran who has been serving as acting chief of the Music Division since January 1995, was recently named chief of the division.

Mr. Newsom, who also served as acting chief from 1985 to 1987, began his career at the Library in the Music Division in October 1966 as a music reference librarian. He also worked as a music acquisition librarian before his promotion in 1974 to head of the Reference Section. In 1978, he was promoted to assistant chief, a position he held for almost 19 years, until he was named chief Dec. 22.

In announcing Mr. Newsom's appointment, Associate Librarian for Library Services Winston Tabb said, "In each position in the Music Division, Jon has demonstrated in-depth knowledge of the division's subject matter – including music, dance and theater – a strong commitment to the Library and the division, and a talent for both developing the collections and bringing them to life through performances and broadcasts."

Formally established at the Library nearly 100 years ago, the Music Division has more than 6 million items in its collections, including extensive holdings of American music, jazz, opera scores and librettos, American musical theater, chamber music and Western European music. Among the hundreds of collections in the division are manuscripts and original materials from Bernstein, Brahms, Copland, George and Ira Gershwin, Koussevitzky, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Paganini, Richard Rodgers and John Philip Sousa. The division also holds two significant musical instrument collections – the Dayton C. Miller Flute Collection and the Gertrude Clarke Whittall collection of five Stradivari instruments.

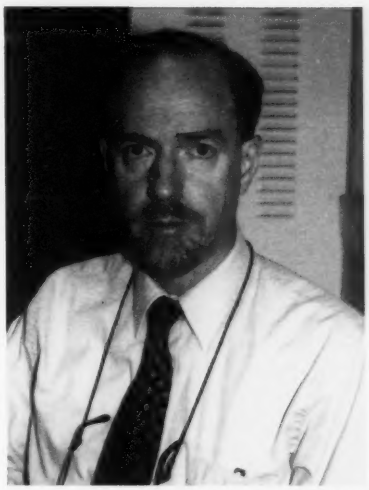
The Music Division operates the Performing Arts Reading Room located in the Library's Madison Building. With the aid of gift funds, the division commissions new compositions and sponsors a number of nationally broadcast concerts each year. With the reopening of the Coolidge Auditorium in October 1997, the Music Division will resume a full season of events, including programs on the Whittall Stradivari instruments by the resident Juilliard String Quartet, films with live musical accompaniment, premieres of newly commissioned works, dance programs and lectures.

Mr. Newsom, a native of New York City, earned an A.B. in music from Columbia College in New York City in 1963, magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa. In 1965, he earned a master's degree in fine arts in musicology from Princeton University, where he was a Woodrow Wilson fellow. After receiving his M.F.A., Mr. Newsom worked as a teaching assistant at Princeton University while completing the course-work for a Ph.D., before coming to the Library in 1966 as a reference librarian.

One of Jon Newsom's latest projects was overseeing a Library jazz festival held last June at the Lincoln Theater in Washington and supported by the Ira and Leonore Gershwin fund. Those concerts featured big band music composed and directed by Buddy Collette, Gerald Wilson and Benny Carter.

Mr. Newsom received an award from the Society for the Preservation of Film Music in 1994 for his "outstanding work in documenting and preserving film music," something he has done since the mid-1970s.

Mr. Newsom has written about jazz; 19th century German music; and American film, band and popular music. Two of his articles, one on music for animated films and another on the work of Hollywood film composer David Raksin, together with two recordings of unpublished soundtracks, were published in a book and record set by the Library, *Wonderful Inventions: Motion Pictures, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound at the Library of Congress*, in 1985. His articles have been published in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Music & Letters* and *American Music*. He has served as editor of the *Musical Quarterly* and *Music Library Association Notes*.



N. Alicia Byers

Jon Newsom

During Mr. Newsom's most recent watch as acting chief, the Library acquired the archives of both Gerry Mulligan and Ella Fitzgerald, two of the most important figures in the history of jazz, as well as William P. Gottlieb's complete archive of photographs of the leading jazz musicians of the era, taken between 1930 and 1948.

Mr. Newsom also was instrumental in acquiring the Moldenhauer Archives in 1988, with 3,500 pieces from Gregorian chant to modern times, the largest single gift of manuscripts to the Music Division. He is the general editor of a book about this archive, an inventory and a series of essays to be published by the Library this year.

He is a founding member of the Society for the Preservation of Film Music and an active member and former officer of both the American Musicological Society and the Music Library Association.

Biographer Lectures in 'Books and Beyond'

Lord Jenkins Discusses 'Politicians and Their Reading'

Roy Jenkins, British lord, parliamentarian and biographer, spoke Feb. 10 on "Politicians and Their Reading." His talk focused on the book-learning of William Ewart Gladstone, four-time British prime minister, totemic Victorian, godfather of modern political liberalism, and the subject of Lord Jenkins's new award-winning biography.

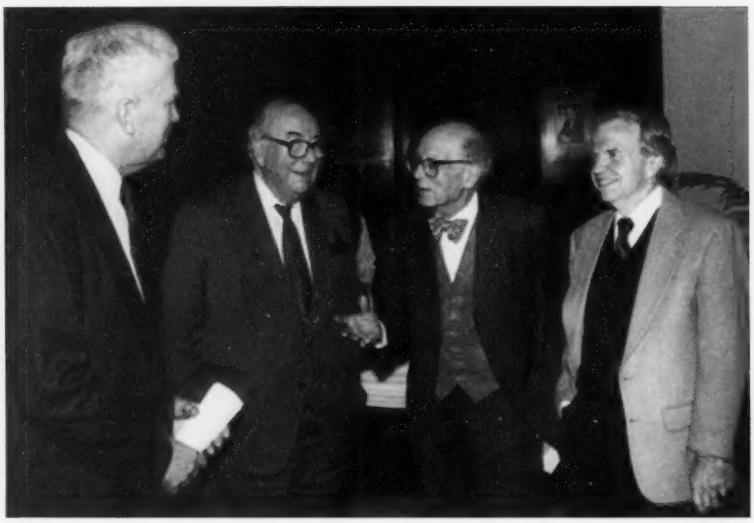
According to Lord Jenkins, Gladstone (1809-98) was "one of the most remarkable human beings" of his or any time.

Introduced by Dr. Billington in the Mumford Room, Lord Jenkins spoke as part of the Center for the Book's "Books and Beyond" lecture series.

He sketched a man of matchless energy who devoured books, with a private library of 20,000 volumes drawn from theology and the classics, as well as specialized works like American inventor Samuel Colt's *On Revolvers*.

Gladstone's prodigious reading habits drew scorn as well as praise. A political rival observed that "Gladstone would rather read a second-rate book than give himself the chance to think first-rate thoughts." Jenkins, however, explained Gladstone's preoccupation with books as a way for a busy and powerful man to shut out the daily hurly-burly of politics.

The British statesman's reading included the popular fiction of his day, especially the novels of Eliot and Trollope, some Dickens and a solid foundation of Austen and the Brontes. Gladstone devoted himself heavily to theology and religious history after losing office in 1874, a time when he considered entering the ministry. The sermons and homilies Gladstone encountered in his religious reading probably influenced the inspired oratory which, combined with his energy and wide knowledge, made him one of the dominant figures of his time. His stump speeches to large audiences, Lord Jenkins said, established mass oratory as an art form.



Yusef El-Amin

Dr. Billington, Roy Jenkins, Librarian Emeritus Daniel Boorstin and John Cole discuss Lord Jenkins's work.

Gladstone's pulpit-style speaking and apparent pedantry served him less well with Queen Victoria who, according to Lord Jenkins, said of her prime minister, "He addressed me like a public meeting."

Lord Jenkins hesitated when Dr. Billington asked him to name a particular book that may have shaped Gladstone's position on a given issue. Gladstone's famous denunciation of the Turks for the Bulgarian atrocities may have been influenced by a certain work, he offered, "but more likely grew out of what a lifetime of reading had made him, like a stalagmite building to a point."

Concluding with a quick survey of other leaders' reading habits, Lord Jenkins contrasted Winston Churchill, who read and wrote history with a sense of grand drama, to Clement Attlee, who brusquely cut men and events down to size. Turning to America, he named Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson as champion readers and writers, while suggesting the opposite of Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover. Of John F. Kennedy's reputation for reading, Lord Jenkins commented, "He liked knowing about books."

– John Martin

Mr. Martin is a copyright examiner in the Copyright Office.

Michnik

Cont'd from page 101

Thanks to that, the party that received 20 percent of the vote [achieved] a stunning victory."

Mr. Michnik surprised some in the audience by admitting that, although he did not vote for Mr. Kwasniewski, he was in some ways relieved, if surprised, that the elections resulted in the formation of a government led by a coalition of two post-Communist parties. "The fact that no one party could be guaranteed of maintaining power indefinitely is a sign of a healthy democratic process," he argued. "A democratic nation cannot be captured, ruptured or imprisoned by one person, no matter how important he is."

Although he conceded that the ex-Communists now in power may slow the progress of democratic reform, he insisted that they will not derail it. "The election proved that arrangements can shift, that another coalition may come to power, but the principle of testing every government and president every four years will continue. The logic of reforms has been maintained as originally set forth," he said.

Mr. Michnik also spoke of the major hurdles his and other Eastern European countries must overcome during their transition. "We had to ask ourselves what the nature of this new state would be – one founded on civic principles or ethnic-national ones," he said, adding that the Balkan states offered an example of the latter philosophy, a path Poland has not chosen to follow.

"Up until now, the civic principle has been winning," he said. "For the first time in its history, Poland is not in conflict with its neighbors and we have very few conflicts with national minorities throughout the country."

Mr. Michnik listed several other questions that have yet to be settled or even fully debated, however. "What role should labor unions play in society or even constitutionally?" he asked, adding that this question could also be applied to the Catholic Church, which played such a significant role in generating worldwide support for the Solidarity movement.

He also mentioned the controversial issues of "decommunization," the proposed enactment of legislation to ban Communism as a political movement, and demands to identify and punish or discredit those behind the long Communist oppression. One member of the audience, in apparent disagreement with Mr. Michnik's refusal to back these demands, suggested that his position helped the post-Communist parties gain ascendancy.

Mr. Michnik defended himself, saying, "I am, in principle, opposed to such measures because the passage of laws to deny Communist parties their rights would deprive an entire category of people their rights. To me, that's like anti-Communism with a Bolshevik face."

He also condemned attempts to ferret out those accused of carrying out Communist repression; he said that "proof" of such wrongdoing would necessarily be culled from files maintained by the old Communist secret police, a source that must be viewed with suspicion. "The information was designed to discredit the very people whose names are in the files," he said.

He also discounted the notion that his decision not to call for the banning of Communist parties or investigation of former members had helped to influence the presidential elections. "I'm flattered that you consider me so powerful," he said with a smile. "But, one must be modest. I do not ascribe so much power to myself. Besides, if I had been so persuasive, Poles would have voted for different parties. I never called on anyone to vote for the Communists."

Despite the disagreement over who should lead the nation, Mr. Michnik pointed out one key issue on which virtually all Poles can agree. "A few days ago, public opinion polls on NATO-based issues were announced," he reported. "Ninety percent of all respondents want Poland to join NATO. On this matter there is incredible consensus. They want Poland anchored in a democratic civilization."

– Barbara Bryant, Development Office

Center for the Book

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D.C., and the Jenny McKean Moore Fund for Writers. Assistance also comes from the D.C. WritersCorps, D.C. Reading Is Fundamental and Barnes & Noble.

The 15 young poets attend five District of Columbia elementary schools, two junior high schools and two high schools throughout the city. Poem selection was a cooperative effort of more than 150 students who attended humanities discussions at area libraries and schools during the past year.

For information about the District Lines Poetry Project, contact Laurie Stroblas, P.O. Box 32105, Washington, DC 20007.

■ **Twenty State Centers Participate in 1997 "Letters About Literature" Contest.** More than 14,000 students submitted entries in the 1997 "Letters About Literature" essay contest sponsored by Weekly Reader's *Read* magazine and the Center for the Book. More than 12,000 of the entries came from the 20 states where state centers for the book actively promoted and participated in the program.

In Texas, for example, where the state center cosponsored the "Letters About Literature" project with the Texas Council of Teachers of English, 98 schools participated and 2,736 students submitted essays. The winner was Thuy Le of Dunbar Middle School in Dickinson, who wrote to Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, explaining to the author what *Uncle Tom's Cabin* meant to her – and in particular what the book taught her about herself. Thuy Le's teacher at Dunbar Middle School is Renee Casey.

In addition to the 20 state winners, contest judges awarded one grand prize and 10 national awards. The grand prize went to Christine Varnado, a junior at Hattiesburg High School in Hattiesburg, Miss., for her letter to Harper Lee, author of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. In her letter, Christine told the author that "you taught me to see the stories in my life by telling me and the world one of the stories in yours." Christine's teachers at Hattiesburg High School are Mike Tebo and Steve Odom.

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